

# Film & TV Production Roles and Departments

## KEY CREATIVE TEAM

### Producer

The producer initiates, coordinates, supervises, and controls matters such as raising funding, hiring key personnel, contracting and arranging for distributors. The producer is involved throughout all phases of the process from development to completion of a project.

### Director

The director is responsible for overseeing the creative aspects of a film, including controlling the content and flow of the film's plot, directing the performances of actors, selecting the locations in which the film will be shot, and managing technical details such as the positioning of cameras, the use of lighting, and the timing and content of the film's soundtrack.

### Screenwriter

Screenwriters or scriptwriters are responsible for researching the story, developing the narrative, writing the screenplay, and delivering it, in the required format, to the Producers. They are almost always freelancers who either pitch original ideas to Producers in the hope that they will be optioned or sold, or who are commissioned by a Producer to create a screenplay from a concept, true story, existing screenwork or literary work, such as a novel or short story.

## PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT

### Executive Producer

An executive producer is usually an investor in the project or someone who has facilitated the funding of the project. There may be multiple executive producers on a project, depending on the financing arrangements.

### Line Producer

Typically, a line producer manages the budget of a film production. Alternatively, or in addition, they may manage the day to day physical aspects of the film production.

### Production Manager

The production manager supervises the physical aspects of the production including personnel, technology, budget, and scheduling. It is the PM's responsibility to make sure the filming stays on schedule and within its budget. The PM often works under the supervision of a line producer and directly supervises the Production Coordinator.

### Production Coordinator

The production coordinator is the information nexus of the production, responsible for organising all the logistics from hiring crew, renting equipment, and booking talent. The PC is an integral part of film production.

### Production Secretary

The Production Secretary provides administration assistance in the production office to the production co-ordinator and production manager.

**Production Accountant**

Production accountants are responsible for managing finances and maintaining financial records during film production. They work closely with the Producer and the production office to manage the day-to-day accounting office functions, and report on the project's financial progress against the budgets (cost reporting).

**Post-production Supervisor**

Post-production supervisors are responsible for the post production process, during which they maintain clarity of information and good channels of communication between the Producer, Editor, Supervising Sound Editor, the Facilities Companies (such as film labs, CGI studios and negative cutters) and the Production Accountant.

**First Assistant Director**

The first assistant director (1<sup>st</sup> AD) assists the production manager and director. They oversee day-to-day management of the cast and crew scheduling, equipment, script, and the set. They ensure the filming comes in on schedule while maintaining a working environment in which the director, principal artists (actors) and crew can be focused on their work.

**Second Assistant Director**

The second assistant director (2<sup>nd</sup> AD) is the chief assistant of the 1st AD and helps carry out those tasks delegated to the 1<sup>st</sup> AD. The 2<sup>nd</sup> AD works closely with the Production Coordinator to create the daily Call Sheets that let the crew know the schedule and important details about the shooting day.

**Third Assistant Director**

The third assistant director (3<sup>rd</sup> AD) works on set with the "First" and may liaise with the "Second" to move actors from unit base, organise crowd scenes, and supervise one or more production assistants.

**Production Assistant/Production Runner**

The production assistant or runner assists the first assistant director with on-set operations. PAs also assist in the production office with general tasks.

**Script Supervisor**

Also known as "continuity", keeps track of what parts of the script have been filmed and makes notes of any deviations between what was actually filmed and what appeared in the script. They make notes on every shot, and keep track of props, blocking, and other details to ensure continuity from shot to shot and scene to scene.

**Stunt Coordinator**

Where the film requires a stunt, and involves the use of stunt performers, the stunt coordinator will arrange the casting and performance of the stunt, working closely with the Director.

**SCRIPT DEPARTMENT****Story Producer**

The story producer has overall responsibility for the story across episodes. In reality TV, the story producer is responsible for creating a story line via editing/producing the show's source footage. They may also be responsible for writing the host's dialogue.

### **Script Editor**

Provides a critical overview of the screenwriting process, using their analytical skills to help the screenwriter identify problems and thereby help to strengthen and develop the screenplay.

### **Script Co-ordinator**

The script coordinator is responsible for producing each draft of the script and annotating it for ease of use for the production team.

## **LOCATION DEPARTMENT**

### **Location Manager**

The location manager is responsible for finding and securing locations to be used for the production and coordinating the logistics, permits and costs involved. They are also the face of the production to the community .

### **Location Assistant**

Assists the location manager and is on-set before, during, and after the filming process. General responsibilities include arriving first at the location to allow the set dressers onto the set; maintaining the cleanliness of the location areas during filming and fielding complaints from neighbors.

### **Location Scout**

Responsible for the initial scouting of locations for the production, taking into account production logistics, eg location fees and budgetary restrictions, local permitting costs and regulations, camera and lighting requirements, convenience to other locations, production services, crew and unit parking.

## **CAMERA DEPARTMENT**

### **Director of Photography/Cinematographer**

The director of photography is the head of the camera and lighting department of the film. The DoP makes decisions on lighting and framing of scenes in conjunction with the film's director.

### **Camera Operator**

The camera operator operates the camera under the direction of the director of photography, or the film director, to capture the scenes on film. Depending on the camera format being used for filming (eg film or digital), a director of photography may not operate the camera, but sometimes these two roles are combined.

### **First Assistant Camera (Focus Puller)**

The first assistant camera (1<sup>st</sup> AC) is responsible for keeping the camera in focus while it is shooting.

**Second Assistant Camera (Clapper Loader)**

The second assistant camera (2<sup>nd</sup> AC) operates the clapperboard at the beginning of each take and loads the raw film stock into the camera magazines between takes. Also oversees the log books that record when the film stock is received, used, and sent to the lab for processing.

**Loader**

The loader transfers the film from the manufacturer's light-tight canisters to the camera magazines for attachment to the camera by the 2<sup>nd</sup> AC. After filming, the loader then removes the film from the magazines and places it back into the light-tight cans for transport to the lab.

**Camera Production Assistant**

Usually a trainee in the camera department, the camera PA assists the crew with menial details while learning the trade of the camera assistant, operator or cinematographer.

**Digital Imaging Technician (DIT)**

On digital productions the digital imaging technician is responsible for the coordination of the internal workings of the digital camera. Under the direction of the director of photography, the DIT will make adjustments to the multitude of variables available in most professional digital cameras to manipulate the resulting image.

**Data Wrangler**

On digital productions the data wrangler is responsible for managing the transfer of data from the camera to a computer and/or hard drive.

**Steadicam Operator**

The steadicam operator is someone who is skilled at operating a Steadicam (trademark for a camera stabilization rig).

**Motion Control Technician/Operator**

This technician operates a motion control rig, which essentially is a 'camera robot' able to consistently repeat camera moves for special effects use.

**Video Split/Assist Operator**

A video split is used by directors to watch a monitor during each take. This is captured by special recorders fitted to film cameras next to the eye piece.

**SOUND DEPARTMENT****Production Sound Mixer (Sound Recordist)**

The production sound mixer is head of the sound department on set, responsible for recording all sound during filming. This involves the choice of microphones, operation of a sound recording device, and sometimes the mixing of audio signals in real time.

**Boom Operator (Boom Swinger)**

The boom operator is responsible for microphone placement and movement during filming. The boom operator uses a boom pole to position the microphone above or below the actors, just out of the camera's frame.

## **GRIP DEPARTMENT**

Grips are trained lighting and rigging technicians. Their main responsibility is to work closely with the electrical department to put in lighting set-ups required for a shot.

### **Key Grip**

The key grip is the chief grip on a set, and is the head of the set operations department. The key grip works with the director of photography to help set up the set and to achieve correct lighting and blocking.

### **Best Boy (Grip)**

The best boy grip is chief assistant to the key grip. They are also responsible for organizing the grip truck throughout the day.

### **Dolly Grip**

The grip in charge of operating the camera dolly is called the dolly grip. They place, level, and move the dolly track, then push and pull the dolly, and usually a camera operator and camera assistant as riders.

## **ELECTRICAL DEPARTMENT**

### **Gaffer**

The gaffer is the head of the electrical department, responsible for the design and execution of the lighting plan for a production. Sometimes the gaffer is credited as "Chief Lighting Technician".

### **Best Boy (Electrical)**

The best boy electric is the chief assistant to the gaffer.

### **Lighting Technician**

Lighting technicians are involved with setting up and controlling lighting equipment.

## **ART DEPARTMENT**

### **Production Designer**

Responsible for creating the physical, visual appearance of the film - settings, costumes, props, character makeup.

### **Art Director**

Oversees the artists and craftspeople who give form to the production design as it develops.

### **Set Designer**

The set designer is the draftsman, often an architect, who realizes the structures or interior spaces called for by the production designer.

### **Illustrator**

The illustrator creates visual representations of the designs to communicate the ideas imagined by the production designer.

**Set Decorator**

The set decorator is in charge of decorating the set, including the furnishings and all the other objects that will be seen in the film.

**Buyer**

The buyer locates, and then purchases or rents the set dressing.

**Set Dresser**

The set dressers apply and remove the "dressing", i.e., furniture, drapery, carpets—everything one would find in a location, even doorknobs and wall sockets.

**Props Master**

In charge of finding and managing all the props used in the film. Usually has several assistants.

**Standby Props**

Work on set during the filming of a scene, overseeing the use of props, and monitoring their continuity. They are able to respond quickly to requests for moving props and fixtures and to help position actors, crew and equipment.

**Props Builder**

Props builders are technicians skilled in construction, plastics casting, machining & electronics.

**Armourer**

The armourer is a specialized props technician who deals with firearms.

**Construction Coordinator/ Construction Manager**

Orders materials, schedules the work, and supervises the construction crew of carpenters, painters and labourers.

**Key Scenic**

Responsible for the surface treatments of the sets, including special paint treatments such as aging and gilding, simulating the appearance of wood, stone, brick, metal, etc.

**Greensman**

Deals with the artistic arrangement or landscape design of plant material.

**HAIR AND MAKE-UP DEPARTMENT****Make-up Artist**

Make-up artists work with makeup, hair, prosthetics and special effects to create the characters look for anyone appearing on screen. Their role is to manipulate an actors on screen appearance.

**Hairdresser**

The hair stylist is responsible for maintaining and styling the hair of anyone appearing on screen. They work in conjunction with the makeup artist.

## WARDROBE DEPARTMENT

### **Costume Designer**

The costume designer is responsible for all the clothing and costumes worn by the cast. They design and plan construction of the garments down to the fabric, colours, and sizes.

### **Costume Supervisor**

The costume supervisor works closely with the designer to supervise the creation or sourcing of garments, hiring of support staff, budget, paperwork, and department logistics.

### **Costume Standby**

The costume standby is present on set at all times to monitor the quality and continuity of the actors and actresses costumes before and during takes. They also assist the cast with dressing.

### **Art Finisher**

An art finisher may be employed during pre-production to "break down" garments. This specialised job includes making new clothing appear dirty, faded and worn.

### **Buyer**

On large productions a buyer may be employed to source and purchase fabrics and garments.

### **Cutter/Fitter**

A costume technician who fits or tailors costumes, usually on-set. They can also be called seamstresses or tailors.

## POST PRODUCTION

### **Film Editor (Offline Editor for video productions)**

Assembles the various shots into a coherent film, working closely with the director.

### **Assistant Editor**

Assists the editor by collecting and organising all the elements needed for the edit.

### **Online Editor (for video productions)**

When the offline edit is complete, adds visual effects, titles, and applies color correction. Also ensures that the program meets the technical delivery specifications.

### **Colourist**

Adjusts the colour of the film to achieve greater consistency.

### **Negative Cutter**

Cuts and splices the film. Provides assembled negative reels to the lab for prints to be made.

## **VISUAL EFFECTS (VFX)**

### **Visual Effects Supervisor**

The visual effects supervisor is in charge of the visual effects department.

### **Compositor**

A compositor is a visual effects artist responsible for compositing images from different sources such as video, film, computer generated 3-D imagery, 2-D animations, matte paintings and text.

### **Roto/Paint Artist**

Manually creates mattes for use in compositing. May also paint visual information out of a scene, such removing wires and rigs, logos and scratches.

### **Matte Painter**

These artists draw/paint entire sets or extend portions of an existing set.

## **POST PRODUCTION - SOUND/MUSIC**

### **Sound Designer**

In charge of the post-production sound of a movie.

### **Dialogue Editor**

Responsible for assembling and editing all dialogue in the soundtrack.

### **Sound Editor**

Responsible for assembling and editing all sound effects in the soundtrack.

### **Re-recording Mixer**

Balances the sounds prepared by the dialogue, music and effects editors.

### **Music Supervisor**

Works with the composer, mixers and editors to create and integrate the film's music. Negotiates licensing of the necessary rights for all source music used in a film.

### **Composer**

The composer is responsible for writing the musical score for a film.

### **Foley Artist**

Creates and records many of the sound effects for a film.

## **OTHER PRODUCTION CREW**

### **Casting Director**

Works closely with the Director and Producer to understand requirements, suggests artists for each role, as well as arranging and conducting interviews and auditions.



**Storyboard Artist**

Visualises stories using sketches on paper. Quick pencil drawings and marker renderings are two of the most common traditional techniques, although nowadays Flash, Photoshop and specialist storyboard software applications are being used more often.

**Caterers**

Catering is provided by specialist companies who drive catering trucks packed with food and a range of equipment including ovens, gas and water to each Unit Base for filming.

**Unit Nurse**

Provides first aid cover and primary healthcare to the cast and crew on a film production. This includes ensuring that people are looking after their own health.

**Unit Publicist**

Responsible for Unit press and the publicity budget set by Producers. Work on a freelance basis, and are hired only for the duration of each shoot, although may also be employed to handle distribution publicity in the run-up to the film's release.

**Stills Photographer**

Stills Photographers usually work on set, recording scenes from the film, but they may also be required to set up photographs in the style of the film in a studio environment.

## INTERACTIVE MEDIA

**Producer**

Identifies and specifies the product's high-level requirements or purpose, ensuring that its business objectives and creative vision are understood and maintained by everyone involved in the project. This is a senior, client-facing role that requires expertise in business, management, content, design and technical disciplines.

**Designer**

Creates the 'look and feel' of an interactive media product. Produces visuals of user interfaces, using software such as Adobe Photoshop or Illustrator. They usually follow a design brief that may be given as verbal instructions, a written specification or 'wire-frame' diagrams.

**Developer**

Developers use authoring tools, mark-up languages and scripting languages to create the product. Sometimes this will be according to designs created by someone else (such as a Designer); other times the Developer may design the product as well.

**Production Assistant**

Contributes to the production of an interactive media product by helping other members of the team. Usually works with the Designer and Developer or with a Web Editor. Often taken on as interns.

**Studio Manager**

Ensures the smooth running of an interactive media studio, managing the team, overseeing the work and liaising with other departments within the company. May also set up the studio and recruit staff.

**Project Manager**

Plans, schedules and co-ordinates interactive media development projects, ensuring they run smoothly, on time and within budget. Focuses on the mechanics of running the project rather than creative requirements.

**Account Manager**

Develops, maintains and improves relationships with existing clients, ensuring their needs are met, and obtaining repeat business from them.

**New Business Developer**

Generates business for the interactive organisation or agency.

**Content Strategist**

Scopes and plans interactive media product's content and determines its overall style - what to say, how to say it effectively, when and where to say it.

**Information Architect**

Interprets high-level requirements in order to design the overall user experience of an interactive media product.

**Web Editor**

Plans and oversees the on-going management of a web site and the publication of content to it. This may involve writing copy from scratch, or coordinating and editing contributions from others.

**SEO Specialist (Search Engine Optimisation)**

Optimises a web site or pages to make them as visible as possible to Internet search engines, in order to maximise traffic to them.

**Programmer**

Produces computer software in order to give a product its functionality. Similar to the Developer role but is usually more purely technical and focuses on high-level programming rather than scripting – although they often overlap. It does not usually involve visual or interface design, but may include technical design, such as devising systems or databases.

**Usability Specialist**

Ensures an interactive media product meets the needs of its intended audiences through analysis, evaluation and testing of the user experience. This is very much a research-led role, but it may sometimes also require technical skills.